

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 SAJ-01 AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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R 161228Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9255

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 3919

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, TU

SUBJ: THE DEMIREL GOVT: THE FIRST MONTH

REF ANKARA 3239, 3077, 2762

BEGIN SUMMARY: SINCE APRIL 12 CONFIDENCE VOTE, THE DEMIREL GOVT HAS SUCCEEDED IN PUTTING A NUMBER OF POPULAR MEASURES INTO EFFECT, AND SERIOUS SPLITS AMONG THE COALITION PARTNERS HAVE NOT SURFACED. AS FOR THE OPPOSITION, THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY (RPP) HAS SHARPLY ATTACKED THE GOVT ON SEVERAL ISSUES BUT HAS YET TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY OF OPPOSITION, WHILE THE DISUNITED DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP) HAS BEEN WEAKENING. DEMIREL HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE HIS POPULARITY BY EXECUTIVE ACTION DURING THE PARLIA-
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MENTARY RECESS THIS SUMMER. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A STRONG SHOWING

BY THE COALITION PARTIES IN NEXT FALL'S SCHEDULED SENATORIAL ELECTIONS MIGHT LEAD TO A DECISION FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS IN SPRING, 1976. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DEMIREL GOVT HAS NOW BEEN IN OFFICE FOR SLIGHTLY MORE THAN A MONTH SINCE ITS INITIAL VOTE OF CONFIDENCE APRIL 12. DURING THIS PERIOD IT HAS DEMONSTRATED CONFIDENCE AND SKILL IN MOVING TOWARD THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MAJOR ELEMENTS OF ITS PROGRAM. THE GOVT HAS GENERATED FAVORABLE PUBLICITY IN ANNOUNCING ITS DECISIONS, ALTHOUGH THE LEGISLATION OF MUCH OF THE PROGRAM STILL REMAINS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE: (A) LOWERING OF FERTILIZER PRICES, (B) RAISING COTTON PRICE SUPPORT SUBSIDIES, (C) A TEMPORARY FUND TO COMPENSATE FARMERS UNTIL A GENERAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM IS ENACTED, (D) ABOLITION OF PEASANT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR VILLAGE ELECTRIFICATION, (E) LOWERING THE YEARS OF WORK NECESSARY FOR PENSION ELIGIBILITY FOR WOMEN TO 20 YEARS, (F) APPROVAL OF THE STATE PERSONNEL LAW, WHICH CARRIES WITH IT A PAY RAISE FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES, (G) AN ALMOST COMPLETE REPLACEMENT

OF ECEVIT APPOINTEES AT THE SENIOR LEVELS OF THE BUREAUCRACY (WITH THE REMOVAL OF ISMAIL CEM IPEKCI AS DIRECTOR OF TURKISH RADIO AND TELEVISION AS THE PRIME EXAMPLE).

2. THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARIES OF THESE MEASURES WILL BE THOSE GROUPS WHICH TRADITIONALLY SUPPORTED THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP), BUT AMONG WHICH THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) MADE MAJOR GAINS IN THE 1973 GENERAL ELECTION FARMERS, LABOR AND WOMEN. MOREOVER, THE STATE PERSONNEL LAW PROBABLY WILL GAIN CREDIT FOR THE DEMIREL GOVT AMONG GOVT EMPLOYEES, WHICH, IN THE MAIN, HAVE BEEN RPP SUPPORTERS.

3. SO FAR, THE DEMIREL GOVT HAS GENERALLY EXHIBITED INTERNAL UNITY WITH DEMIREL IN CONTROL. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND SOME IRRITATION HAS BEEN CAUSED THE JP BY NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) DEPUTY PRIME ERBAKAN'S PROPENSITY TO GRAB HEADLINES WITH PREMATURE STATEMENTS, THERE IS AS YET NO EVIDENCE THAT ERBAKAN HAS ENGAGED IN THE OBSTRUCTIONISM WHICH HAMSTRUNG THE RPP-NSP GOVT. DEMIREL HAS MAINTAINED HIS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE CRUCIAL INDEPENDENT BLOC AND ENJOYS THEIR SUPPORT. FOR THE TIME BEING, AT LEAST, DEMIREL HAS

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LITTLE TO FEAR FROM HIS OPPOSITION, WHICH HAS BECOME FURTHER WEAKENED SINCE THE CONFIDENCE VOTE BY RESIGNATIONS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP). IF ECEVIT SOUGHT NOW TO BRING DOWN THE GOVT VIA ANOTHER VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, HE WOULD HAVE TO DETACH ELEVEN VOTES FROM THE GOVT (IN ADDITION TO THE TOTAL SUPPORT OF THE RPP AND DP) IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE 226 VOTES NECESSARY.

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4. THE RPP, FRUSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT A GOVT IT REGARDED AS "ANACHRONISTIC" IS STEALING ITS THUNDER THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF RPP-STYLE PROGRESSIVE REFORMS, HAS YET TO EXHIBIT A COHERENT OPPOSITION STRATEGY. FOR THE MOMENT IT IS CONCENTRATING ITS ATTACK ON THE CEM REMOVAL ("AN ATTEMPT TO STILL THE SOCIAL ACTIVISM OF TRT"), ON THE GOVT'S SETTLING OF THE OIL IMPORT PRICE DISPUTE WITH MOBIL AND SHILL-BP ("A SELLOUT TO FOREIGN COMPANIES AT PRICES HIGHER THAN THE WORLD MARKET PRICE") AND ON THE CONTINUATION OF MARTIAL LAW. ON THE LATTER POINT, THE RPP THEME IS THAT THE DEMIREL GOVT IS USING MARTIAL LAW TO REPRESS CIVIL LIBERTIES AND TO DISCRIMINATE IN FAVOR OF RIGHTIST STUDENTS OVER THE LEFT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE WHAT EFFECT THE RECENT BODILY ASSAULT ON DEMIREL AND

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THE GOVT'S ATTEMPT TO LINK THE INCIDENT TO
THE RPP WILL HAVE ON OPPOSITION-GOVT RELATIONS.

5. PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF THESE FRUSTRATIONS, THE RPP'S LEFT
WING VENTED ITS GRIEVANCES WITH ECEVIT'S LEADERSHIP AT
A RECENT PARTY MEETING. ECEVIT WAS CRITICIZED FOR HAVING
RESIGNED AS PRIMIN, FOR ARBITRARY USE OF HIS POWERS AND LACK OF
CONSULTATION WITH PARTY ORGANIZATIONS, AND FOR NEGLECT OF
LEFTIST PRINCIPLES. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE THAT
THIS OUTBURST IMPLIES ANY FUNDAMENTAL REBELLION AGAINST ECEVIT'S
LEADERSHIP, EVEN AMONG THE PARTY'S LEFT.

6. THE DP, DEEPLY AND PERHAPS MORTALLY WOUNDED BY ITS
SPLIT DURING THE FORMATION OF GOVT PERIOD, NOW HAS ONLY 27
DEPUTIES (45 WERE ELECTED ON ITS TICKET IN 1973) AND COULD
POSSIBLY LOSE A FEW MORE. IT HAS DEVELOPED NO POLICY OF OPPOSITION
AND IS STILL TORN BETWEEN AN IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY FOR MANY
GOVT POLICIES AND A DISTASTE FOR DEMIREL'S LEADERSHIP. DP
CHAIRMAN BOZBEYLI POINTED OUT A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT THE DP
HAD MUCH IN COMMON WITH TURKES' NATIONALIST ACTION
PARTY. (FORMER DP DEPUTY SPECULATED TO AN EMBOFF RECENTLY
THAT THE DP-NAP-REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY MIGHT MERGE BEFORE THE
NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.)

7. DEMIREL NOW HAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BUILDING A RECORD OF
ACCOMPLISHMENTS BEFORE GOING FOR ELECTIONS:
A. ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, THE GOVT NO DOUBT WILL
CONTINUE TO PRESS FORWARD POPULAR MEASURES. ITS ABILITY TO
DO THIS WILL BE ENHANCED BY THE ADJOURNMENT OF PARLIAMENT
(PROBABLY IN MID-JUNE) WHICH WILL GIVE IT THE SUMMER AND
EARLY FALL TO GOVERN WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF EMBARRASSING
PARLIAMENTARY SETBACKS. SCHOOL VACATIONS WILL ALSO REDUCE THE
INCIDENCE OF STUDENT VIOLENCE.

B. DEMIREL IS CAUTIOUSLY NEGOTIATING ON THE CYPRUS PROBLEM,
INSISTING ON A "NATIONAL POLICY" (I.E., RPP SUPPORT
FOR ANY AGREEMENT). TWO OF HIS DEPUTY PRIMINS, ERBAKAN
AND TURKES, REMAIN AS POSSIBLE STUMBLING BLOCKS TO A SOLUTION,
BUT FOR THE MOMENT, AT LEAST, THEY HAVE BEEN REFRAINING FROM
PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CYPRUS POLICY.

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C. DEMIREL MAY BE VULNERABLE TO RPP ATTACK IF HE FAILS
TO RESPOND TO THE CUTOFF OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE (IN THE

CONTINUED ABSENCE OF US CONGRESSIONAL ACTION). THE RPP MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WAIT MUCH LONGER BEFORE YIELDING TO THE URGE TO USE THIS ISSUE AGAINST THE GOVT.

8. IF DEMIREL SUCCEEDS IN HOLDING HIS GOVT TOGETHER, IN DEVISING POPULAR PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT BACKFIRE ECONOMICALLY, AND IN REGISTERING SOME FOREIGN POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS, HE PROBABLY CAN LOOK FORWARD OPTIMISTICALLY TO THE OCTOBER ELECTIONS INVOLVING ON-THIRD OF THE SENATE SEATS. HIS PARTY'S PERFORMANCE IN THOSE ELECTIONS WOULD LIKELY DETERMINE WHETHER HE WILL CALL FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS IN SPRING, 1976.
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